THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Army Headquarters and the Institution of Engineers (India), Delhi State Chapter conducted a one day Seminar on "Disaster Management and the Armed forces-A National Effort" on 11th September, 2002 at New Delhi.

The main theme of the Seminar related to engineering aspects of Disaster Management. The point regarding Nuclear Disaster came up only in passing. It was suggested that it was not enough to train the security forces alone, but the training must be spread down to the grass root level for disaster mitigation. The Government will give due consideration in consultation with Ministries concerned, to the recommendations of the Seminar as and when they are received.

Test-fired of HATF-IV missile by Pakistan

2854. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan recently test-fired a medium range surface-to-surface ballistic missile, HATF-IV;

(b) if so, whether these missiles carry warheads which could be nuclear, chemical and biological; and

(c) If so, what steps Government is taking to protect its armed forces and population from this type of warfare?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As per information available, the missile is capable of carrying a nuclear warhead and may have the capability to deliver other unconventional warheads also.

(c) Government continues to closely monitor all developments related to Pakistan's nuclear and missile programmes, as also possible threats from use of chemical and biological weapons, and remains fully committed to taking all necessary steps to effectively safeguard India's security and national interests.